

Remarks:

Reconsideration of the application is requested.

Claims 1-4 remain in the application. Claims 1 and 4 have been amended. Claim 2 has been withdrawn from consideration at this time.

In item 3 on pages 2-3 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1, 3 and 4 have been rejected as being anticipated by Lislegard (US Pat. No. 6,176,769) under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e).

The rejection has been noted and the language of claims 1 and 4 has been amended in an effort to even more clearly define the invention of the instant application.

Before discussing the prior art in detail, it is believed that a brief review of the invention as claimed, would be helpful.

Claim 1 and 4 call for, inter alia:

said shaped surfaces being selected from a group consisting of inclined surfaces and curved surfaces, said shaped surfaces exclusively contacting said protruding edges of said belt.

Lislegard discloses a V-belt drive, in which the shaped surfaces of the belt guide contact the full surface of the end faces of the belt including the protruding edges (see Fig. 1d). This device represents one of the conventional

principles for guiding a belt as described in the background part of the specification of the instant application (see page 2, lines 10-15). The disadvantages of such device are to be overcome by the invention of the instant application.

In contrast to Lislegard, in the invention of the instant application, the shaped surfaces (28.1, 28'.1, 28''.1, 28'''.1) of the belt guide only contact the protruding edges (29.1, 29'.1, 29'.2, 29.3) of the belt. In other words, the contact between the shaped surface and the protruding edge is a line contact rather than a full-surface contact. This is the central concept of the invention of the instant application. The advantage of this concept is that the belt can revolve in proper alignment with optimally little slippage (see page 2, lines 22-26 of the specification).

Clearly, Lislegard does not show "said shaped surfaces exclusively contacting said protruding edges of said belt", as recited in claims 1 and 4 of the instant application.

Claims 1 and 4 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over Lislegard and since claim 3 is dependent on claim 1, it is believed to be patentable as well.

In item 5 on pages 3-4 of the above-mentioned Office action, claims 1, 3 and 4 have been rejected as being unpatentable

over Hofmann et al. (US Pat. No. 6,250,224) in view of Lislegard under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a).

Hofmann et al. disclose a flat belt drive, which represents another one of the conventional principles for guiding a belt as described in the background part of the specification of the instant application (see page 1, line 21 to page 2, line 8), the disadvantage of which are to be overcome by the invention of the instant application. Also in Hofmann et al., the shaped surfaces of the belt guide contact the full surface of the end faces of the belt including the protruding edges.

It is accordingly believed to be clear that none of the references, whether taken alone or in any combination, either show or suggest the features of claims 1 and 4. Claims 1 and 4 are, therefore, believed to be patentable over the art and since claim 3 is dependent on claim 1, it is believed to be patentable as well.

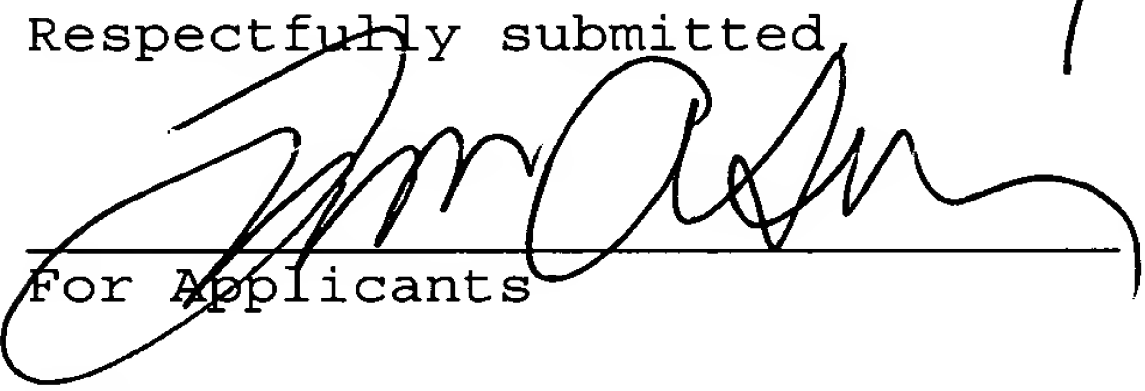
In view of the foregoing, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1, 3 and 4 are solicited. Consideration of non-elected claim 2 is requested when generic claim 1 is allowable.

In the event the Examiner should still find any of the claims to be unpatentable, counsel would appreciate a telephone call so that, if possible, patentable language can be worked out.

In the alternative, the entry of the amendment is requested as it is believed to place the application in better condition for appeal, without requiring extension of the field of search.

If an extension of time for this paper is required, petition for extension is herewith made. Please charge any fees which might be due with respect to Sections 1.16 and 1.17 to the Deposit Account of Lerner and Greenberg, P.A., No. 12-1099.

Respectfully submitted,


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Marked-Up Version of the Amended Claims:

Claim 1 (twice amended). A belt drive for a machine for printing images on a flat printing material, comprising:

a continuous belt for revolving during operation[;], said belt defining a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction, said belt having two protruding edges oriented in the longitudinal direction of said belt and being opposite one another in the transverse direction of said belt; and

a belt guide having stops with shaped surfaces acting on said two protruding edges of said belt;

said shaped surfaces being selected from a group consisting of inclined surfaces and curved surfaces, said shaped surfaces exclusively contacting said protruding edges of said belt.

Claim 4 (amended). A machine for printing images on flat printing material, comprising a belt drive including:

a continuous belt for revolving during operation[;], said belt defining a longitudinal direction and a transverse direction, said belt having two protruding edges oriented in the longitudinal direction of said belt and being opposite one another in the transverse direction of said belt; and

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a belt guide having stops with shaped surfaces acting on said two protruding edges of said belt;

said shaped surfaces being selected from a group consisting of inclined surfaces and curved surfaces, said shaped surfaces exclusively contacting said protruding edges of said belt.